361 823 As was mentioned in the previous section /not translated/, the villages are laid out along the roads and always in an east-west direction (cf. Fig. 16). /56/ Curiously enough, the people gave as the reason for this arrangement the fact that the land slopes down to the west (toward the ocean) and that the rain water can run off in this direction. It is true, of course, that this point is an important consideration inasmuch as they are careful to lay out the village in such a way that the rain water will not flood one of the rows of huts. Nevertheless, this cannot be the sole reason for the east-west arrangement. I have observed that even on completely level ground -- which, in other words, does not favor the drainage of water in the direction intended -- the east-west plan was the [487] preferred one. When, for instance, a route goes south, it will make a turn before reaching the village, cross the latter in an east-west direction, and at the other end will resume its southerly direction (cf. Fig. 16, the Nsăla ng I-Beniaa route). / It is obvious that in this arrangement reasons other than the one mentioned play a part, such as the general trek to the west of which mention has already been made in the previous section (1).

[764] 1. Compare also the predominantly east-west direction of the graves.

361 A Pangwe village consists mostly of two rows of houses running parallel to each other with the road between them (Plate 4 and Fig. 16). More rarely, a village consists of a single row of houses along the road. Furthermore, villages come into being through the combination of two or more individual establishments, and as a result *different villages display different stages of development, observable* everywhere side by side in the region.

361 @592 64 If the father of a family wants to found an establishment, he builds two houses, a dwelling and a meeting house /men's house/. The dwelling is the real domain of the wife, where she works and lives with her children and where the man for the most part stays only at night, very rarely in the daytime. The meeting house, on the other hand, is the usual haunt of the man, where he busies himself during the day, performs his incidental tasks, and receives visitors and where the wife comes only now and then. As the

361 children grow up, their father builds each one a house of his own
●592 next to the original dwelling. In the same way, each of his addi-
624 tional wives receives her own house from him. His first wife, however, remains his favorite wife, and consequently it is her house -- in other words, the one that he built first and which is adjacent to the meeting house -- which remains his home. He keeps it even after the death of the wife.

The next step in the development toward a village takes place when, for some reason or other, a second head of a family joins his establishment to that of the first. This happens, for instance, when a member of the same or of another family unit moves in, or when after the death of the father the eldest son inherits his meeting house, dwellings, and wives, and the younger son is unwilling to submit to his older brother who is now also his chief. He or the new arrival, as the case may be, builds the necessary number of houses for himself and his family along the same row. Sometimes he may even build his houses directly /57/ /Fig. 17/ adjacent to the existing houses, and he will likewise finish off his settlement with a meeting house protruding from the line. If the meeting house is a temporary one, it is placed lengthwise in the square (see Fig. 16); if it is a permanent one, it is placed transversely (see Plate 4).

In this way, a "village" arises from the original individual establishment, and because, like a pair of eyes (dzîs; plural, mîs), it consists of two halves (Fig. 18), the village is called dzâ, plural mâ (see what has been said about the meaning of prefixes /not translated/. There are, thus, two family heads in each village; their rows of houses join somewhere in the middle, with a boundary line which is recognizable, of course, only to the initiated. Everyone, however, can see the two meeting houses (belonging to the two heads of family) located on opposite sides of the village square.

The two family heads are legally equals. Certain conditions, however, which we shall discuss more fully in a later section, give one of the heads a position of slight superiority. Sometimes a third establishment is added to the two individual establishments constituting the village, and it also has adjoining rows of houses as well as a meeting house (see Fig. 18).

361 As has been said, the meeting house is the principal haunt of
L21 the chief; in the same way it serves all his sons, male relatives,
314

sons. When cacao was introduced, cultivation was done collectively by the nda bôt, with the ésa selling the produce and taking charge of the money. The younger generation quickly tired of this state of affairs and left their families in order to have plantations of their own. In addition, the inflationof land values from the growing of export crops led to division upon the death of the ésa and brought on the splintering of the nda bôt. This had never been very stable, even before the colonial period, but the cessation of military needs made possible a precocious "swarming off," which had not occurred before except when a new nda bôt was large enough to provide for its own defense.

In spite of this disintegration, jal and nda bôt remain the basic units of Pahouin life, moe so than the ayoñ. Development of private property notwithstanding, there does exist a juridical community with collective responsibility and obligatory self-help among its members. Many young people denounce this (cf. Eza Boto, Ville cruelle /Cruel City/, no. 182) and partly leave the jal in order to escape. But that is futile because the ties pread throughout the country become closer at a distance /from the jal/ and because the solidarity of the extended family is probably even stronger among emigrants than among stay-at-homes.

d. The Limied or Household Family; Kinship

The limited or household family, composed of an economically independent man, his wife, his children, sometimes old relatives /parents/, unmarried brohers and sisters, is becoming more and more important, both within the nda bôt framework and outside it. The missions have contributed a good deal to this, especially at the outset of evangelical activity, in order to separate the catechumens from their still animistic minds mi bôt (they incline to react in the opposite direction nowadays to fight against "destructive individualism"). But economic changes have also played an important part. The household family is the unit of the migrant petty official, of the small-scale planter. There is no word for it; people say either mone nda bôt, "little extended family," or simply nda, "house."

Purely for convenience I shall discuss kinship on this level, in terms of an adult married man. /50/

423 continues to have rights over her old garden plots and may gather the
532 harvest from them. Among the Bané and the Boulou the position of divorced women is not the same; but the tendency is so, for when fallow land is cleared, every woman goes back to the plots she used to work four or five years before, and sons may demand plots that have been cultivated by their mothers.

Cacao plantations raise other problems. A man concerned for his children's future may turn over a plantation to a wife or encourage her to make one for their son. In other cases childless women start
[533] plantations as a means of providing for old age. Women with children do not have to fear, for their children will look after them. Finally, there is an even more important /83/ change appearing: a matrimonial system of community of property is developing. When a woman has collaborated with her husband to set up a plantation, she has the right upon his death to keep the usufruct. Even if her son inherits the plantation and sells the produce, it is she who collects the proceeds. This is an important development, because it is evidence of a kind of equality between spouses who are keen and efficient in harvesting the produce of the same piece of land. It furthermore shows that the
● [534] household is a legal reality vis-à-vis the two individuals, on the one hand, the patriarchal family, on the other. (J. B.)

Chapter 6

Principal Elements of Culture

1. Physical and Mental Characteristics

a. Anthropological Data

141 The first travelers describe the Fang as very tall, well built, and with a formidable appearance. This opinion certainly contained a good deal of subjective evaluation, because the figures given, for instance by L. Dugast, some of which are cited below, indicate simply an above-average height: